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EDITORIAL COMMENT



PUBLIC HEALTH LEGISLATION

THE agitation is becoming almost universal for requiring a health certificate before marriage. This of course has for its motive prevention of the spread of certain diseases and an effort to control the propagation of those physically and morally defective. Bills to this end are reported to be before the legislatures of California, Oklahoma, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Another movement which is attracting considerable attention is the effort to provide by law for the sterilization of criminals and feeble minded. All of such measures are of special interest to nurses, who should lend them their support when they are under consideration in their states. No class of people knows better the awful burden to a family of having even one such defective within the home circle to be cared for, aside from the economic aspect of the question. Recent statistics are showing that a large proportion of the revenue of many states is having to be used for the institutional care of criminals, feeble-minded, and insane. This expense should be lessened, not by giving less care to such unfortunates, but by reducing the numbers needing care in the way suggested above and by better immigration laws, many of these charges being foreigners.

PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

AMENDMENTS to the laws for state registration are now under consideration in Massachusetts, New York, Illinois and Oklahoma. New

bills are being introduced in California, Montana, Kansas, Arkansas, Ohio and Florida.

We want to remind nurses in all these states that the success of any legislation depends upon the influence brought to bear by each legislator from his home centre. If the voters and the nurses in a legislative district have not impressed upon their representatives that the measure is important and that they wish him to support it he is very likely, when the measure comes up, to turn it down as something in which his home people are not interested, consequently every nurse is of importance in a legislative campaign. She can write to her representative, asking his support, she can interest her male relatives and friends, and she can obtain signatures of physicians and prominent men and women of the community in support of the measure, such petitions to be sent to the senator and assemblymen of her district. The more a man is impertuned by his constituents in regard to any bill, the more likely he is to be interested and to work vigorously for its support.

It may be readily understood that legislators who come from somewhat isolated districts are more difficult to reach and are less likely to be informed of the importance as educational measures of such bills, consequently nurses in small towns can often do single-handed greater work for the cause than those in the larger cities.

AFTER TEN YEARS

It is now ten years since the first bills for state registration were passed. When the pioneers in such movements began they had before them no precedents in this country to follow. We were not as closely united or as perfectly organized as at the present time and it was with difficulty that members of working committees could reach nurses in every legislative district of the state. Now we find all of this changed. It is perfectly possible for the chairman of a legislative committee to know almost to a man the sentiment of every member of a legislature. She can reach the nurses of the state quickly, and having been selected for this peculiarly trying office because of her broad knowledge of the nursing affairs of the state, she can be in almost personal touch day by day with her associates in every legislative district. If the members of every degree stand shoulder to shoulder, ready to co-operate with her in a manner made possible through this closer organization, there should not be the prolonged struggle in securing new laws or amendments that was universally the case during the earlier years of the registration movement.

State registration has wonderfully strengthened the links of all of our organization life. Ineffective and inadequate as most of the laws

have been, the results during these ten years, considered as a whole, will stand out conspicuously in the educational development of nursing, and will be more appreciated in a period of years than they can be at the present time.

With so much legislation in process we want to speak of one thing which robs the work of much of its satisfaction for those who are actually in the field, which is the habit of destructive criticism on the part of great numbers of nurses who are giving no active co-operation along these lines. We think those who are rendering active assistance are justified in making what is generally called constructive criticism,—comments on or even condemnation of the work of others which they feel is detrimental to the cause: provided they can suggest a better way and are willing to share in the work which the changes brought about by their criticism would involve. But those who are so absorbed in their own work or interests that they have not allowed themselves to become identified with nursing affairs, should show their fellow workers the courtesy of silence if, after strenuous labors, the results are not all that have been anticipated. This principle applies equally well to all lines of nursing work, whether in connection with *alumnæ*, county, state and national associations, central registries or club houses.

For the comfort of those who do their best, and whose reward is criticism, we repeat a remark made to us once upon a time by a prominent business man and philanthropist: "Show me a person who has never been criticized, and I will prove him to be a nobody."

NEED OF A NATIONAL BADGE

THE request has come from the state of Oklahoma that we should put before the members of the American Nurses' Association the consideration of the adoption of some uniform badge or insignia to be worn exclusively by registered nurses, not of one state, but of all where laws are in force. The suggestion also comes that the states shall send their representatives to Atlantic City prepared to discuss such a plan. Of course we cannot say that this subject would have place on the programme but it is a matter about which all registered nurses should be concerned, and if some plan could be devised by which some uniform badge can be adopted, it would seem to us a better arrangement than for each state to have its own pin for registered nurses. A number of states have already adopted some such device.

It has many times been suggested that there should be a national uniform for private duty nurses which should be patented, but this we know would be quite impossible to bring about as even the uniforms of the officers of the United States army and navy cannot be safeguarded

so that they are not imitated so closely that only an expert would fail to be deceived. But though feeling quite sure that a national uniform is out of the question for the registered nurse, we think there is no reason why some simple device, as inexpensive and inconspicuous as the button of the Legion of Honor, and to be worn with as great pride and sense of obligation, should not be adopted.

AN APPRECIATION

OUR older readers will miss from this issue of the JOURNAL our "Notes from the Medical Press." Miss Scovil, for the first time in her thirteen years' connection with the magazine, is unable to send in her material, owing to the serious illness and death of a member of her family. In making this explanation, we take occasion to express our appreciation of the kind of service she has given the JOURNAL. Her department requires her to read each month the leading medical journals and to glean from them in condensed form such facts and suggestions as are necessary for nurses to be familiar with in order to co-operate intelligently with the physician in the care of the patient. Although Miss Scovil has retired from active nursing work and carries the burdens of a home-maker, and although she is at such a distance from the editorial office, her material never fails to reach us several days in advance of the date set for department material to come in.

What we have said of Miss Scovil's promptness applies also to Miss Dock, who, whether travelling abroad or tramping in the cause of equal suffrage, has never failed either to have her material ready on time or to notify us early that her pages may be put to some other use.

OVARIAN COMPLICATION IN PAROTITIS

A SUGGESTION which is new to us, but which may not be to all of our readers, has been brought out by Dr. Harlow Brooks, in a paper on "Involvement of the Ovary in Epidemic Parotitis," which appeared in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* for February 1. He shows that the sex organs of women may be affected during a siege of mumps as are those of boys and men. We judge from his paper that there is little literature on the subject,—the cases he cites are of young married women. He gives it as his opinion that while in 50 per cent. of cases in males, the generative organs are involved, a similar affection in women or girls, though rarer, is more common than had been supposed. It has probably often been overlooked, though the organs in women are so deep-seated that they are not as likely to become infected as in men.

THE HISTORY OF NURSING

AFTER some unavoidable delay, the third and fourth volumes of the History of Nursing are at last available. Our reviewing editor has given some idea of the scope of these volumes, which should be on the shelves of every training-school library and nurses' club, while those who are able to purchase nursing literature for their own use should not fail to secure these books at once.

The fact that in these volumes are recorded those events in nursing history in which women of our own time have had an active part will make the reading of them intensely interesting to both the older and younger group of nurses.

We wish to again call to the attention of American nurses the fact that Miss Dock reaps absolutely no financial return from the sale of these books, but the entire revenue is to be turned over to the treasury of the International Council of Nurses for the promotion of the work of that organization. Official membership in the International Council is necessarily small, so that it has not the revenue assured that local, state or national organizations may have. This makes Miss Dock's generosity the more to be commended by nurses everywhere as it will make it possible to carry on the international work without heavy demands being made upon either organizations or individuals.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE QUARTERLY

WITH its January number the Visiting Nurse Quarterly has changed its name to *The Public Health Nurse Quarterly*, and the publishers are announced as The National Organization for Public Health Nursing, instead of the Visiting Nurse Association of Cleveland, this being the first issue under the new ownership. The number of pages in the January issue is 106, against 62 in that preceding. The number contains interesting papers by Ella Phillips Crandall, Mary S. Gardner, Mary Ard Mackenzie, Robert C. Chaddock, J. A. Stucky, M.D., Katherine Tucker, and Adelaide Nutting. The headquarters of the magazine are still in Cleveland, and both the editorial and business management are, as formerly, in the hands of lay women. The tremendous growth of all departments of social service nursing, with the necessity, always, of close co-operation and association with organizations of laymen, give this magazine under its present management a very wide field.

We repeat the announcement made in the December JOURNAL of a combination subscription rate for the *Public Health Nurse Quarterly* with the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING for \$2.50, the subscription being sent to the office of either magazine. Any one wishing the *Pacific Coast Journal of Nursing* with the others may obtain the three for \$3.75.

FRIEDMANN'S CLAIM DOUBTED

MANY of our readers will remember the intense interest with which the results of experiments in the use of Koch's lymph for the cure of tuberculosis were awaited in this country about twenty-five years ago, and the disappointment that followed the demonstration of its use which was proven to be too uncertain to be of much value. For some weeks past the press has given great publicity to reports of the discovery of a serum by Dr. Friedmann, a German physician, who claims for his discovery all, and more, than Koch hoped for. The difference is that Dr. Koch gave his formula freely to the medical profession, while Friedmann has kept his secret and seems to be trying to obtain promises of great financial returns before making it known. This commercial attitude, and the fact that he is not a man of wide experience as a bacteriologist is making the members of the medical profession suspend judgment as to its possible value. It seems almost criminal to arouse such an intense interest in the minds of the masses of those suffering from this disease before it has been clearly proven to be of value. We know from actual observation the pathetic eagerness with which a group of young men, representing all grades of society, pressed for admission to a hospital where it was known the Koch treatment was to be given, and the heart-breaking disappointment of the failure of the experiments.

RECOGNITION OF THE NURSING PROFESSION

A COMMISSION of eight persons has been appointed in New York State by Governor Sulzer for the purpose of investigating health conditions, whose membership is as follows: Dr. Herman Biggs, chairman; Homer Folks, secretary; John Kingsbury, Dr. Edward R. Baldwin, Ansley Wilcox, Adelaide Nutting, Dr. John C. Otis, and Dr. W. E. Milbank. So far as we know this is the first time such recognition has been accorded the nursing profession.

SUFFRAGE COMMITTEE OF NURSES

ALTHOUGH this issue of the JOURNAL will not have reached all of its readers until after the 3rd of March, many of them will still be interested to know that in the suffrage procession which took place on that date, trained nurses occupied a special section. A committee having this section in charge is composed of Lavinia L. Dock, Estelle L. Wheeler, Isabel McIsaac, Jane A. Delano, Georgia M. Nevins, Reba J. Taylor, and Lily Kanely.